Protect San Diego's Urban Forest
Council President Scott Peters, First District
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Urban forests are critical to San Diego's long-term environmental and economic sustainability. Like a natural forest, an urban forest is an entire ecosystem, which includes trees planted near homes and buildings, along major roads and in public parks. However, unlike a natural forest, an urban forest needs our help to survive.

In the City of San Diego, there are more than 170,000 shade trees and more than 30,000 palms planted on public and private property. San Diego has been recognized by national forestry groups for its efforts to expand its acres of tree cover. The City's Urban Forestry Division, under the leadership of Drew Potocki, plants dozens of new native trees each year, and maintains an inventory of the number and type of tree in each neighborhood. In University City, the most common trees are Pine and Eucalyptus. Other trees found in UC include the California Sycamore and Brisbane Box.

Over the past several months I have worked with County Supervisor Ron Roberts, the University City Community Association beautification committee, the Village Garden Club of La Jolla, Caltrans, Aztec Landscaping, and City staff on a jacaranda tree planting project along Governor Drive.

On April 28th, we celebrated Arbor Day by recognizing the numerous community volunteers for their hard work, and the completion of planting 11 Jacaranda trees along Governor Drive. Each spring, residents can look forward to the explosion of purple for which Jacarandas are known and loved.

The San Diego County Regional Energy Office is giving away over 14,000 free trees to homes, businesses and schools around the County as part of their "Cool Communities" shade tree project. Shade trees save energy by keeping homes and buildings cool, reducing the need for air conditioning. Along with Jacarandas, the program distributes Crepe Myrtle, Oaks, Pines and other species. Visit www.sdenergy.org for more information on the Cool Communities program.

Study the trees in your community. Are there sidewalks or public thoroughfares that would benefit from tree plantings? Contact my office to request a tree planting on your block.

Remember, a single large neighborhood tree can release up to 400 gallons of water into the atmosphere each day, remove toxic pollutants from the atmosphere, and help remove and filter smog-producing pollution. Trees slow down rainwater, helping runoff to soak into the soil at a slow and even rate. This takes the pressure off our storm sewers and allows for the renewal of ground water. Trees and their roots also form a barrier against soil slippage and mudflows.

Trees improve San Diego's aesthetic environment, absorb noise, calm traffic along busy thoroughfares, reduce stress and create a peaceful place to relax or socialize. Making San

Diego a beautiful place to live and work improves our quality of life and fosters economic prosperity.

By preserving and protecting trees we will continue to help renew and enhance San Diego's urban forest for future generations to come.

To contact Council President Peters, call (619) 236-6611 or email, scottpeters@sandiego.gov.